

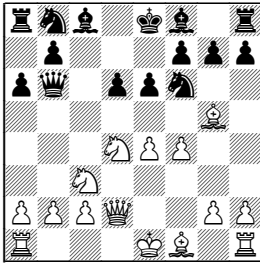
Part 1

structure is identical to line D3, only the queen is on d3 instead of d2. In my opinion that favours Black, for White is deprived of ideas with ♖f1-f3-d3 or ♖b3 at some moment. Also, the f4 pawn is hanging in some variation.

**9...♘g4! 10 ♖e2 ♖e3=**

This position is considered in line D1.

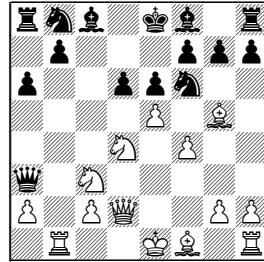
**D. 8 ♖d2!**



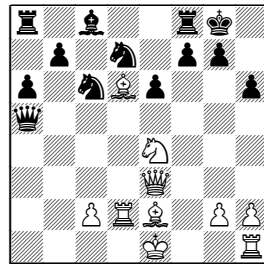
**8...♘c6**

Unfortunately, the famous Poisoned Pawn variation 8...♖xb2, which has been my pet line for years, recently suffered a strong blow. The game Shirov – Guliyev, Rapid Canada de Calatrava ESP, 07.04.2007 considerably shaken my trust in that system. Of course, a fifty years old variation, employed by world champions Fischer, Kasparov, Anand, and most of the top grandmasters, is not easy to refute by a single game. I hope very much that it will be regenerated, but at this moment I have no antidote to the quite forced variation:

**8...♖xb2 9 ♖b1! ♖a3**



10 e5! h6 11 ♔h4 dxe5 12 fxe5 ♟fd7 13 ♟e4 ♖xa2 14 ♟d1 ♖d5 15 ♖e3 ♖xe5 16 ♔e2 ♔c5 17 ♔g3 ♔xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♖a5+ 19 ♟d2 0-0 20 ♔d6 ♟c6

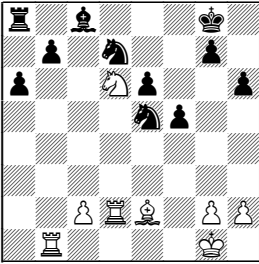


In the first edition of this book, in February 2007, I analysed the game Anand – Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 23.01.2007, which went on 21 ♔xf8 ♟xf8 22 0-0. Here Kolev proposed the strong novelty 22...♖e5!?, and I was happy with Black's position. In the diagram position Shirov comes up with a major improvement:

21 0-0!!, which apparently gives White the upper hand. The only sensible response, in order to avoid being mated, seems 21...f5 22 ♔xf8 ♟xf8 23 ♟d6 ♖e5! (Guliyev lost outright after 23...b5? 24 ♔f3 ♔d7 25 ♟xf5 exf5 26 ♖xd7 ♟xd7 27 ♔xc6 ♟d8 28 ♔xd7 1-0) 24 ♖xe5 ♟xe5 25

3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♗g5

♖b1 ♖fd7



I have the feeling that Black could hold this endgame, but he has to overcome some obstacles on his way to consolidation. Computers assess this position strongly in White's favour, but they incorrectly think that White can win with pawns on only one side. In fact Black has counterplay. His biggest problem is to find time for the manoeuvre ...♗g8-h7-g6-f6. If he coordinated his pieces to attack the kingside, White's extra exchange could prove irrelevant. The a-pawn serves only to deflect the opponent's rooks and win time for activation of Black's rook. I'll give here some variations of my analysis to illustrate the main ideas:

26 ♖xc8 (26 ♖xb7 ♖b8 is a draw: 27 ♗xa6 ♖c5 28 ♖d8+ ♖h7 29 ♖b5 ♖xa6 30 ♖xe5 ♗xb7 31 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 32 ♖b5 ♗e4 33 ♖xb8 ♗xc2) 26...♖xc8 27 ♖xb7 ♖c5 28 ♖a7 ♖b8, and now:

a) 29 ♖c7 ♖e4 30 ♖d1 a5 31 ♖a1 ♖h7 32 ♗f3 (32 h3 ♖g6 33 ♖xa5 ♖f6 34 ♖a1 ♖g3 35 ♗f3 g5) 32...♖b4 33 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 34 ♖xa5 (34 h3 a4 35 ♖a7 ♖e2 36 ♖1xa4 ♖xc2 37 ♖e7 ♖c6 38 ♖aa7 ♖g6 39 ♖xg7+ ♖f6 40 ♖h7 ♖g5 41 ♖ag7+ ♖g6=) 34...♖g4 35

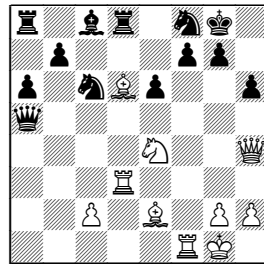
♖a1 ♖e2 with counterplay;

b) 29 ♗f3! ♖c8 30 ♖e2 (30 ♖d6 ♖h7 31 ♗e2 ♖e4 32 ♖xe6 ♖c6 33 ♖xa6 ♖d4=) 30...♖c6 [30...♖c4 31 ♖e1 ♖a3] 31 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 32 ♖d2 ♖h7 33 ♖d8 ♖b6 34 h4 ♖g6 35 ♖g8 ♖h5. Who is attacking here?!

I must note that the other version of the endgame is worse for Black:

21...♖b6?! 22 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 23 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 24 ♖d6 f5 25 ♖b1 ♖a4 26 ♗c3±.

Finally, 21...♖d8? 22 ♖f4 gives White fantastic initiative: 22...♖f5 23 ♖h4 ♖a5 (or 23...g5 24 ♖h5 ♖g6 25 ♗c7 ♖e8 26 ♖xg6+ fxg6 27 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 28 ♖f6+ ♖h8 29 ♖xd7 ♖e7 30 ♖b6 ♖ae8 31 ♗d6±) 24 ♖d3! ♖f8 (24...f5 25 ♖g3+-)



25 c4!!

Black is helpless against the threat 26 ♖f2 and 27 ♖a3, capturing the queen, e.g. 25...♖g6 (25...♖b6+ 26 ♖h1) 26 ♖f2 ♖d7 27 ♖c5 ♖xd6 28 ♖xd6 28 ♖xf7+.

Two computer games refute deviations on move 20:

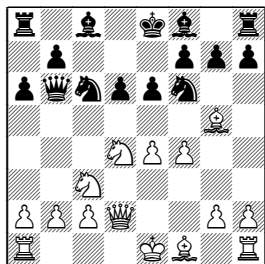
DEEP JUNIOR – DEEP FRITZ, Ultimate Computer Challenge Elis-ta, 08.06.2007: 20 ♗d6 ♖e8 21 0-0

f5 22 ♖g3 ♘c6 23 ♖g6 ♗d8 24 ♙c4  
 ♘h8 25 ♘g5 ♖xg5 26 ♗xe8+ ♘h7 27  
 ♙f4 ♖g6 28 ♖xg6+ ♘xg6 29 ♙xe6  
 ♘f6 30 ♙c4± and:

**RYBKA – SHREDDER WCCC**  
 Amsterdam, 18.06.2007: 20 ♙d6  
 ♖e8 21 0-0 f5 22 ♖g3 fxe4 23 ♖g6  
 ♗d8 24 ♖f7 ♗c3 25 ♙g4 ♘f8 26 ♙xf8  
 ♗a1+ 27 ♖f1 ♗xf1+ 28 ♘xf1 ♖xf8+  
 29 ♖f2 ♘c6 30 ♙h5 ♖xf2+ 31 ♘xf2  
 ♘e5 32 ♗e8+ ♘h7 33 ♙e3 b5 34  
 ♘f4+–.

Of course I contemplated early deviations like 10 e5 ♘fd7, having in mind 11 ♘e4 d5, but 11 f5! opens up the centre in favour of White.

In the first edition I mentioned 8...♘c6 as the backup line. Now I'll consider it with more detail.

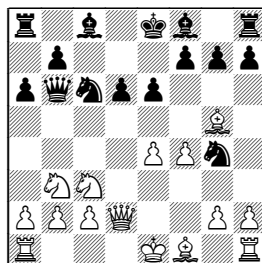


- D1. 9 ♘b3
- D2. 9 0-0-0
- D3. 9 ♙xf6!?

White should decide whether to allow a trade of queens or not. In my opinion, the endgame is satisfactory for Black, but with a strong drawish tendency. Line C is most testing. It leads to complex positional play with mutual chances. I recommend there a rare approach, which is ne-

vertheless absolutely sound and could be unpleasant to White.

### D1. 9 ♘b3 ♘g4!



Black is OK after this move. He uses the weakness of the central dark squares:

#### 10 ♙d3

Alternatively:

10 f5 ♙e7 11 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 12 fxe6 ♙xe6 13 ♘d4 ♘e5 14 0-0-0 ♙g4 15 ♙e2 ♙xe2 16 ♗xe2 ♖c8, Nataf – Sutovsky, Reykjavik, rapid, 2003.

White is unable to prevent the plan with ...g5 by 10 ♙h4, due to 10...♗e3+ 11 ♙e2 ♙e7 12 ♙g3 g5! 13 ♘d1 ♗xd2+ 14 ♘xd2 ♖g8 15 ♙d3 h5, and Black is already on top, Savchenko – Naiditsch, Moscow, 22.02.2007.

10 ♗e2 ♗e3 11 ♘d1 ♗xe2+ 12 ♙xe2 h6! 13 ♙h4 g5 14 ♙xg4 gxh4 15 ♘e3∞ Nataf – Sutovsky, rapid Reykjavik 2004.

#### 10...h6 11 ♙h4 g5

This thematic break is very efficient in the current situation. By destroying White's pawn centre, Black deprives the opponent of a clear plan.

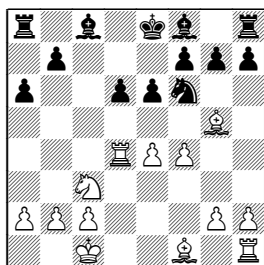
3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♗f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♗g5

**12 fxg5 ♗e7 13 0-0-0 ♖e3 14 ♗e2 ♗ce5**

Black has full control of the centre. The game Short – Naiditsch, Baku, 11.05.2007 saw further 15 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 16 ♖he1 ♖xd2+ 17 ♗xd2 hxg5 18 ♗g3 ♗e5 19 ♗f3 f6 with a pleasant game for Black.

♗xd7 ♗xd7 (In Wijk aan Zee, 2004 Kramnik beat Svidler with bishops of opposite colour after 14...♗xd7 15 ♗e2 h6 16 ♗h4 ♗h5 17 ♗xh5 ♗xh4 18 ♖hd1 ♗f2 19 ♖d3 ♗e7 20 ♗b1 ♖c8=, but the position is quite equal, of course. Capturing by knight is more interesting.) 15 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 16 ♗e2 e5=.

**D2. 9 0-0-0 ♖xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 11 ♖xd4**



Some Sicilian endgames promise White a lasting edge, but in the diagram position the pawn on f4 is a major drawback of his setup. With queens, it provides for dangerous dynamic options, but in an endgame it only weakens the e4-pawn. The question is, could White make use of his better development.

**11...♗e7**

11...♗d7 avoids 12 ♗a4, but enables 12 e5 h6 13 ♗xf6 (13 ♗h4 dxe5 14 fxe5 ♗c5 15 ♖d3 ♗d5=) 13...gxf6 14 exd6 ♗c6 15 ♗e2 0-0-0 16 ♖hd1 ♗xg2=. The choice of move order is a matter of taste.

**12 ♗e2**

Or 12 ♗a4 ♗d7 13 ♗b6 ♖d8 14

**12...♗d7**

Black is lagging behind in development, so 12...b5 13 ♗f3 ♖b8 is too risky, e.g. 14 e5! dxe5 15 fxe5 ♗d7 16 ♗f4 with a big spatial advantage.

**13 ♖hd1**

White often plays firstly 13 ♗f3 ♗c6, which does not change the character of the position. Here Kosteniuk put his rook on e1, 14 ♖e1, when 14...h6 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♗h5 ♗f8 would have been double-edged.

White tried to be more flexible in Kolev – Krush, Las Vegas, 10.06.2007: 13 ♗b1 ♗c6 14 ♗f3. The typical 14...h6 works well again, since 15 ♗h4 e5 16 fxe5 dxe5 is balanced.

**13...♗c6 14 ♗f3 h6!**

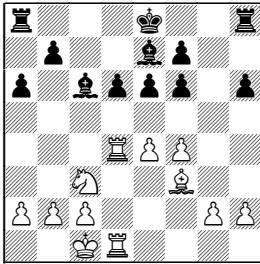
This move practically gains the bishop pair, for 15 ♗h4 g5 16 fxg5 ♗d7 17 ♗g3 hxg5 18 ♗d5 is not too promising. In Grover – Mamedov, Balaguer 2006 Black was even better after ♗xd5 19 exd5 e5 20 ♖b4 f5 21 ♖xb7?! e4 22 ♗e2 f4 23 ♗f2 ♖xh2.

**15 ♗xf6 gxf6**

We see a typical Sicilian position. Black has fair chances, be-

Part 1

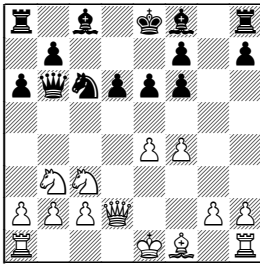
cause without queens his king is well placed in the centre.



Brkic – Dydyshko, Calvia ol 2004 saw further: 16 ♖h5 ♜g8 17 g3 b5 (or 17...♗f8!? 18 a4 ♗g7=), when 18 a4 ♗f8 would have been about equal.

16 f5 is more consistent, when Black should answer 16...h5 See for more details **game 7 Walek – Shtyrenkov**, Pardubice 1998.

**D3. 9 ♖xf6!? gxf6 10 ♖b3**



**10...♖d7**

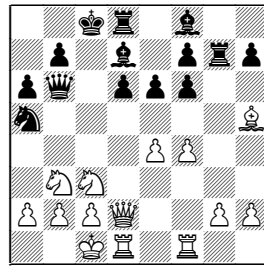
10...♞c7 11 0-0-0 b5 seems too daring, but it has prominent followers. I prefer to castle long, and only later to prepare a queenside attack.

**11 0-0-0 0-0-0 12 ♖e2 ♜g8!?**

In the first edition I considered only plans with ...h5-h4. You can find detailed explanation of them in the “Complete Games” section – **game 8 VI. Dimitrov – Kiril Georgiev**, Plovdiv 2004.

**13 ♖h5 ♜g7 14 ♜hf1 ♖a5!**

It is important to play this move before White placed his rook on the third rank, for instance, 4...♗b8 15 ♜f3, and 15... ♖a5? would fail to 16 ♖d5!



Black has solved the opening problems. There are only two games so far to illustrate such a statement. You should see the excellent game **9 Kolev – Goloshchapov, Hoo-geveen 2005** in the “Complete Games” section. The newest try was Korbut – Gaponenko, Ekaterinburg 26.05.2007: 15 ♗b1 ♖c4 16 ♞f2 ♞xf2 17 ♜xf2 ♖e3 18 ♜g1, when Black should have started his usual play on the queenside by 18...♗b8=. It seems that this line could become trendy soon.

21 ♖e3 ♘a6?! 22 ♜c1 ♚b6 23 ♘f5

23 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 24 ♘f5 ♚xe3 25 ♘xe7+ ♘f8 26 ♜xe3 ♘xe7 27 ♘xa5± was simpler.

23...♜xc1+ 24 ♘xc1 ♚c7 25 ♘xe7+ ♚xe7 26 ♚b6 ♜a8 27 ♜e2 e5 28 f5?

White was still better, but he had to prove that by a couple of concrete moves: 28 fxe5! ♚xe5 (28...dxe5 29 ♜c2 a4 30 ♜c6↑) 29 ♚c6 ♜a7 30 ♜c2 g6 31 ♚b6 ♜a8 32 h4±. Black's bishop is shaky and that ties down the queen with its defence. After the text the roles are reversed again.

28...♚xg5 29 ♚xd6 ♚d8 30 ♚xd8+ ♜xd8 31 ♜c2 h5 32 ♜c5 ♘xd3+ 33 ♘xd3 ♘d3 34 ♜xa5 f6

The endgame is very interesting and complex. I do not know who is better, but I'm pretty sure that Kamsky should not have allowed the enemy pawn on b3 with his next move. His chance was 35 ♜a4 ♜d4 36 a3 ♜xe4 37 ♜xb4 ♜e1+ with a new phase of the game.

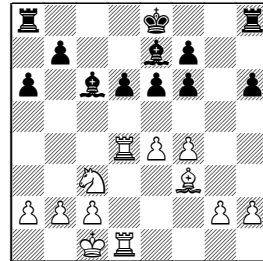
35 a4 b3 36 ♜c5 ♜d1+ 37 ♜c1 ♜d4

White is probably beyond salvation already.

38 a5 ♜xe4 39 a6 ♜a4 40 ♜c6 h4 41 ♘c1 ♜a2 42 ♚b6 ♘h7 43 ♘d2 ♜xb2+ 44 ♘c3 ♚b1 45 a7 ♜a1 46 ♚b7 e4 47 ♘b2 ♜a5 48 ♘xb3 e3 49 ♘c2 ♜a2+ 50 ♘d1 ♘h6 51 h3 ♘g5 52 ♜xg7+ ♘xf5 53 ♜g4 ♘e5 54 ♜xh4 f5 55 a8 ♚ ♜xa8 56 ♘e2 f4 57 ♘f3 ♜a1 58 ♜h5+ ♘d4 59 ♜h8 ♜f1+ 60 ♘e2 ♜f2+ 61 ♘e1 ♜h2 62 h4 f3 0-1

7. Walek – Shtyrenkov  
Pardubice 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♘g5 e6 7 f4 ♚b6 8 ♚d2 ♘c6 9 0-0-0 ♚xd4 10 ♚xd4 ♘xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♘e7 12 ♘e2 ♘d7 13 ♘f3 ♘c6 14 ♜hd1 h6 15 ♘xf6 gxf6



The absence of queens considerably changes Black's plans in this pawn structure.

1. He should try to gain space on the kingside by pushing up the h-pawn. White is unable to win it on h4, because he lacks a piece which could attack it along the e1-h4 diagonal.

2. Black's king could defend the d6 and e6-pawns from e7.

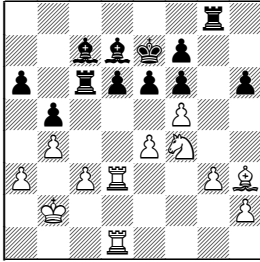
3. It is difficult to say whether to push b5, or not. At any case, Black should contemplate that possibility only after having completed the first two tasks.

4. Both sides must be prepared for long positional manoeuvring. For illustration, I'll show the game Koch – Sakaev, Metz 11.02.2007:

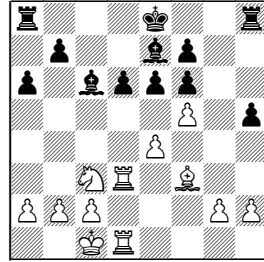
9 0-0-0 ♚xd4 10 ♚xd4 ♘xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♘e7 12 ♘e2 ♚b8?! 13 ♘f3 b5 14 a3 (14 e5! dxe5 15 fxe5 ♘d7 16 ♘f4 g5 17 ♘g3 h5 18 h3 h4 19 ♘h2 ♘b7

3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♗g5

20 ♜e4±) 14...♗b7 15 ♖e1 h6 16 ♗xf6  
gxf6 17 f5 ♖g8 18 ♜d3 ♗d7 19 g3 ♗a8  
20 ♜e2 ♗d8 21 ♜f4 ♗e7 22 ♗g2 ♗b7  
23 ♗h3 ♗c8 24 b4 ♗d7 25 ♗b2 ♖c8  
26 ♖ed1 ♖c6 27 c3 ♗c7



White's only way to generate threats is to transfer the knight to f4: 17 ♜e2 h4, when 18 ♖c4 is not effective, due to 18...♖g8 19 ♜d4 ♗d7=. Or 18 ♖4d2 ♖g8, planning ...♖g5.



28 ♖e1 ♗b6 29 ♖f3 ♖g5 30 ♗f1  
♖g8 31 ♗d3 ♗c8 32 ♗c2 ♗d8 33 ♗b3  
♖b7 34 h3 ♖g5 35 g4 ♗d7 36 ♖d1 ♖b8  
37 ♜h5 e5 38 ♖fd3 ♗c7 39 ♜g3 ♗c6  
40 ♗d5 ♗d7 41 ♗c2 ♖gg8 42 ♗d2  
♗b6 43 ♗e2 ♖gc8 44 ♗f3 ♖c7 45  
♜e2 ♖d8 46 ♗b3 ♗c6 47 ♗d5 ♗d7  
48 ♗b3 ♗c6 49 ♗d5 ♗d7 1/2-1/2

### 17...♗f8?

Even without queens Black must be careful. His idea is to free room on e7 for the king, but it had to be shaped differently: 17...h4! 18 ♜e2 ♖g8, and if 19 c4, then 19...exf5.

The moral of this game is: if Black completes development successfully, his position is very solid. Still, it is better to have the pawn on h4.

### 18 ♗b1 ♖d8 19 b3?!

Here White could have exposed the opponent's mistake on the previous move by 19 ♜e2 h4 20 c4! ♖g8 21 ♜d4 ♗d7 22 fxe6 fxe6 23 c5±.

### 16 f5 h5

At first sight 16...♖g8 seems attractive, hoping for 17 ♜e2 exf5 18 ♜g3 (or 18 exf5 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♖g2 20 ♜c3 ♖xh2 21 ♖c4 b5 22 ♖c7 ♗f8 23 ♜d5 ♗d8 24 ♖d7 h5 25 ♖xd6 h4!) 18...fxe4 19 ♗xe4 ♖g5 20 ♗xc6+ bxc6 21 ♖h4 ♗d7 22 ♖xh6 f5 23 ♖h7 f4 24 ♜e2 ♖xg2 25 ♜xf4 ♖f2 26 ♜d3 ♖f5=. White is not in a hurry, though. He could prepare the knight manoeuvre with 17 ♖4d2! ♖c8 18 ♜e2 ♗d7 and now seal the kingside with 19 g4±. That assures him of a small edge.

### 19...♗e7

19...h4!? 20 ♜d5 ♗xd5 21 exd5 e5=.

### 20 h3?!

White commits a grave positional mistake, after which his kingside is petrified and he is slightly worse. He should have tried to use the placement of the enemy king in the centre with 20 ♖e1 h4 21 ♜d5+ ♗xd5 22 exd5 e5 23 ♖c3 ♗h6=.

### 17 ♖4d3?!

This move has no clear aims.

20...h4 21 ♖e1 ♗h6 22 ♜d5+ ♗xd5 23 exd5 e5 24 ♖e4 ♗f4 25 ♖c4 ♖c8 26 ♖dc3 ♖xc4 27 ♖xc4 ♗d8 28 c3 ♗d7 29 ♗c2 ♖c8 30 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 31 ♗d3 ♗d8 32 ♗h5 ♗e7 33 a4 1/2-1/2

has to trade queens.

**17 ♖f3 ♜xd2 18 ♞3xd2 ♞cg8 19 h4 ♙c8 20 ♜e2 b5?!**

20...b6 was more to the point, but I was still trying to win this equal ending, hence my terrible “active” move.

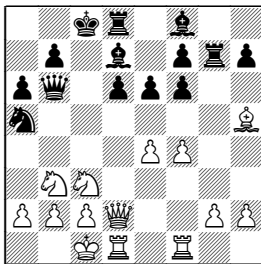
**21 ♜bd4 ♙b7 22 ♜xc6+ ♙xc6 23 f5 e5 24 ♜c3 ♞c8 25 ♜d5 ♙xd5 26 ♞xd5 ♞c6**

The bishops of opposite colour gave me chance to hold this position.

**27 c3 ♜c7 28 ♜c2 ♜d7 29 a4 b4 30 ♞1d3 ♙d8 31 a5 ♙c7 32 ♙e2 ♜e7 33 ♜b3 bxc3** ½-½

**9. Kolev – Goloshchapov  
Hoogeveen 2005**

**1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♙g5 e6 7 ♞d2 ♞b6 8 ♙xf6 gxf6 9 ♜b3 a6 10 0-0-0 ♙d7 11 f4 0-0-0 12 ♙e2 ♞g8 13 ♙h5 ♞g7 14 ♞hf1 ♜a5**



**15 ♞e2**

Understandably, Kolev refrains from 15 ♜xa5 ♞xa5 16 ♞e2, because Black could free his bishop pair by ...f5 now or later, e.g. 16...♜b8 (or 16...f5 17 exf5 ♞xf5) 17 ♞d3 ♙e7

18 ♜b1 ♞c8. Still, that could be the more practical decision, since Black’s knight is a dangerous piece.

**15...♜b8 16 ♜b1 ♞c8 17 ♞f3**

White’s only reasonable plan is linked with f4-f5, but 17 f5 could be countered by 17...♜c4! (17...♜xb3 is much worse, for after 18 axb3 Black is unable to prevent the tactical blow e5, which is very strong against 18... ♙e7 – 19 e5!. 18...♞d8 does not save the day either: 19 ♞d3 ♙e7 20 e5! fxe5 21 f6 ♙xf6 22 ♞xd6) 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 ♞xf6 ♙e7 20 ♞f3 a5, and Black is attacking at full throttle, for example, 21 ♞d4 ♜e5 22 ♞f2 ♞g5!?. (22...♞xc3 is only equal after 23 bxc3 a4 24 ♞b4 ♞c7 25 ♜c1 ♞xc3 26 ♞d2 ♞xd2 27 ♞xd2 d5 28 ♞bd4 ♙c5 29 exd5 ♙xd4 30 ♞xd4 ♞xg2=)

**17...♙e7**

I would prefer to retain the knight: 17...♜c4!? 18 ♞g3 ♜a3+ 19 ♜c1 ♞xg3 20 hxg3 ♙e8.

**18 g3**

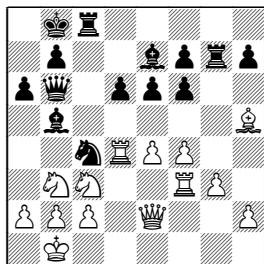
Any White attempt for breaking in the centre could prove fatal: 18 e5 fxe5 19 fxe5 d5 20 ♞xf7 ♞xf7 21 ♙xf7 ♜c4 22 ♞d3 ♞f8.

18 ♜xa5 ♞xa5 19 ♞g3 ♞xg3 20 hxg3 does not save White from trouble, 20...♞xc3 21 bxc3 d5 22 exd5 ♙a3 23 ♞c4 ♙a4 24 ♜a1 ♙xc2 25 ♞d4 ♙xd1 26 ♙xd1. This variation could be improved with 20...♙e8!?, when 21 f5 ♞xc3! 22 bxc3 d5 23 exd5 ♙a3 24 ♞c4 ♙a4 25 ♜a1 ♙xc2 26 ♞d4 e5 is clearly in Black’s favour.

**18...♜c4 19 ♞d4 ♙b5**

19...♞c7 maintains more tension.

3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♗g5



### 20 ♖d1?!

It was high time for simplification: 20 ♖xb5 ♖xb5 21 ♖c3! ♖a3+ 22 ♖c1 ♖xc3 23 bxc3 e5 24 ♖xb5 (24 ♖b4 ♖xe2 25 ♗xe2 d5 26 ♖a4 dx4) 24 ..♖xb5 25 ♖d3 exf4 26 gxf4 d5 27 exd5 ♗a3+ 28 ♖d2 ♖g2+ 29 ♖d1 ♖hx2 30 ♗xf7 ♖h1+ 31 ♖d2 ♖h2+-. In these lines White keeps the balance. Now Black takes over the initiative with the thematic break:

### 20...f5! 21 exf5?!

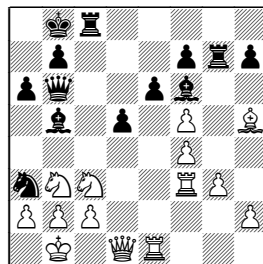
White is faced with concrete problems and he must have exerted himself to calculate a few sharp variations. Best was 21 a4, when Black should probably step back with 21...♗d7 22 exf5 ♗f6. Forced play with 21...fxe4 22 ♖xe4 d5 (22...♗d7 23 ♖d5) 23 ♖xd5 exd5 24 ♖xe7 ♗xa4 (threatening ♖f6) 25 ♖c3 ♖a3+ 26 ♖c1 ♖xc3 27 bxc3 ♖d6 28 ♖xf7 ♖c4 29 ♖d4 ♖xf7 30 ♗xf7 ♖e7 31 ♗h5 led to about an equal endgame.

### 21...♗f6 22 ♖e4 d5

This is consistent, but 22...exf5! was stronger: 23 ♖d5 (23 ♖e1 ♗c6 24 ♖d3 a5→) 23...♖xb2. Of course, it is a computer line. Humans prefer to follow plans.

### 23 ♖e1 ♖a3+

23...♖d6!?



### 24 ♖a1?!

White misses the last chance to stay in the game: 24 bxa3 ♗xc3 25 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 26 f6 ♖g6 27 ♗xg6 hxg6.

24...d4 25 bxa3 d3 26 ♖e5 ♖xc3 27 cxd3 ♗c6 28 ♖fe3

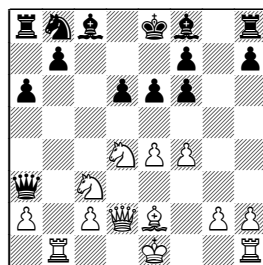
Or 28 ♖f1 ♗xe5 29 fxe5 ♖c7 30 d4 ♗d5-+.

28...♖xe3

0-1

## 10. Hracek – Kiril Georgiev Batumi 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 ♖b6 8 ♖d2 ♖xb2 9 ♖b1 ♖a3 10 ♗xf6 gxf6 11 ♗e2



This variation is similar to 9 ♖b3. At first it might even look as a better version of it, because the knight is more active on d4 and, as a bonus, the b1-rook is on a striking

3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♙e3

tested successfully in 2 games so far. Curiously, the first of them, Brkic – Senff, Zagreb 2006, was played on the next day after the convincing victory of Anand over Leko. Apparently the Hungarian GM highly appraised the novelty since he employed it himself a month later.

### 17 ♜h2

17 ♜e3 ♜b6 leaves Black in control of d5 and enough pieces to create counterplay. (17...♜xb3 18 axb3 ♜c5 19 ♜d5 f5 20 exf5 ♙xf5 21 b4 is in White's favour although Ivanchuk showed how easy is to lose this position as White against Kasparov) 18 ♙e2 ♙e7 19 ♜d5 ♙xd5 20 ♙xd5 ♙fd8 21 ♜h2 ♜ac4 22 ♜g4 ♜xd5 23 ♙xd5 ♜b6 24 ♙d3, Brkic – Senff, Zagreb 20.01.2006. Now best is 24...d5!↑.

### 17...♜c4 18 ♙xc4 bxc4

The positional threat ...♜c5 forces White to embark on multiple exchanges which lead to a draw.

### 19 b4 cxb3 20 axb3 ♙xd5 21 ♙xd5 ♙xc3

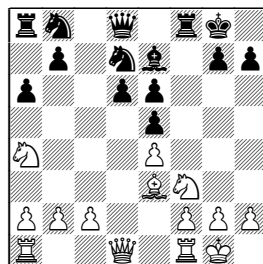
We have been following Svidler – Leko, Morelia/Linares 20.02.2006 which ended here in a draw in view of 22 ♙xa6 (22 ♙xd6 ♙xb3 23 ♙ed1 ♙b7=) 22...♜f6 23 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 24 ♙xd6 ♙xb3=.

### A3. 10 ♙xe6!?

This move was brought to the fore by the game Ivanchuk – Topalov, Morelia/Linares, 18.02.2007, which went on with 10...fxe6 11 ♜a4 ♜g4 12 ♙d3, and it turned out that

White is better.

### 10...fxe6 11 ♜a4 ♜fd7!



### 12 c4!

12 ♙d3 is insufficient for an advantage in view of 12...b5 13 ♙b3 (13 ♜c3 ♜f6 14 a4 b4 15 ♜e2 ♜c6=) 13...bxa4! 14 ♙b7 14...♙xf3! (the key of Black's counterplay!) 15 gx3 ♙g5. Unexpectedly White discovers that he cannot capture the a8-rook, due to 16 ♙xa8? ♙xe3 17 fxe3? ♙c7-+ and the queen is trapped. Therefore he has to play 16 f4 (16 ♙xg5 ♙xg5+ 17 ♜h1 ♙d8! 18 ♙ad1 ♜b6 19 c4 ♜d7 20 ♙xd6 ♙b8 favours Black) 16...exf4 17 ♙d4 f3 18 ♜h1 (18 ♙xa8?? ♙f4-+) 18...e5! 19 ♙xa8 exd4 20 ♙d5+ ♜h8 21 ♙xd6 ♙f6∞. This position is highly unbalanced, but I prefer the 3 pieces against the 2 white rooks.

### 12...♜c6 13 ♙b3!?

13 ♙c1 is logical, but not too concrete. Black maintains the balance with 13...♜c5! 14 ♜xc5 (14 ♜c3 ♙e8 15 a3 ♙g6 16 ♙e1 a5?) 14...dxc5 15 ♙xd8 ♙axd8 16 ♙cd1 b6!, building a fireproof defensive line.

White's alternatives are:

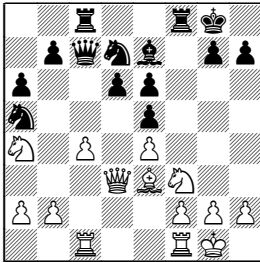
13 ♙e2?! ♙e8! followed by ...♜c5 and ♙g6;

13 b4 ♜xb4 14 ♙b1 ♜c6 15 ♙xb7

Part 4

♖a5 16 ♜xd7 ♝xd7 17 ♘b6 ♞c6 18  
 ♘xa8 ♘xc4 19 ♙g5 ♙f6=.

**13...♗a5 14 ♞d3 ♞c7 15 ♜ac1  
 ♜ac8**

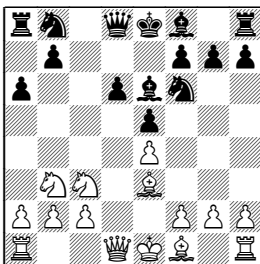


This is a complex middlegame position, which needs testing. Now 16 ♜fd1 b6 17 ♘c3 ♞b7♞ allows Black to cover all sensitive squares. perhaps White should try to break in with:

**16 c5!? dxc5 17 b4 c4 18 ♞c3  
 b5 19 bxa5 bxa4**

Our pawns are doubled, but they control well the centre. I suppose that Black can hold this position.

**B. 7 ♗b3 ♙e6**



This move is more versatile than 7...♙e7. One of its pluses is the possibility of 10...d5 in the line B1a, which effectively levels the game.

- B1. 8 f4
- B2. 8 ♞d2
- B3. 8 f3

Of course White has a great number of other plans which are not so popular. I'll note two of them:

**8 ♞e2?!**

This not only hampers the development of ♙f1, but also misses control over important dark squares on the queenside. In some variations White lacks the resource ♗a5. Black could simply develop: 8...♗bd7 9 0-0-0 ♙e7 or 9 f4 exf4 10 ♙xf4 ♙e7=, but he has an even better option. It consists of the typical Sicilian sacrifice on c3:

8...♗bd7 9 f4

Or 9 0-0-0 ♜c8 10 f3 ♜xc3! 11 bxc3 d5 and Black is in total command.

9...♜c8 10 f5 ♙c4 11 ♞f3 d5! White has wasted time on ♞e2-f3 in the opening and that is punished by this standard breakthrough.

**8 ♗d5.** White aims to gain space on the queenside after the imminent exchange on d5. This plan is not dangerous, for Black is able to restrain the enemy pawn advance on the flank:

8...♗bd7!

